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A

SHORT MEMOIR

OF

THE LIFE

AND DYING EXPERIENCE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JANE,

COUNTESS OF BURFORD.



A
SHORT MEMOIR
OF
THE LIFE
AND DYING EXPERIENCE
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
Beauchamp **(JANE)**
COUNTESS OF BURFORD,

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
JULY 13, 1800.

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

PSALMIST,

Heav'n waits not the last moment, owns her friends
On this side death; and points them out to men,
A lecture, silent, but of sovereign pow'r!
To vice, confusion; and to virtue, peace.

YOUNG.

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1800.

SHORT MEMOIRS

THE LIFE
AND DYING EXPERIENCE



THE RIGHT

JANE

COUNTRESS OF BURLINGAME

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE

JULY 18 1860

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE writer of the following Memoir, has thought that a more just tribute might be paid to the Memory of Lady Burford, by publishing a separate and more detailed account of her life and dying experience, than by printing the substance of both or either of the Sermons which were preached, from short notes only, on the melancholy occasion of her death. This must be his apology for seeming to deviate from her own or the wishes of any of her friends, being fully convinced that her ladyship would readily have adopted that plan which tended most to display the riches of divine grace, and to promote the spiritual benefit of those, for whose future happiness she ever manifested the most anxious solicitude.

It is the fervent prayer of the writer, that her benevolent wishes, which alone dictated a request that any thing respecting herself should be made public, may be fully gratified. And he will think himself happy, if the following account of her sentiments and experience, living and dying, shall convince any, that there is more to be enjoyed in real christianity, than they have ever conceived, and shall henceforth lead them to embrace the same

bleſſed hope, that with her they may rejoice in life, triumph in death, and at length riſe to life eternal.

The following Memoir would have appeared much earlier, had not the writer's engagements, in conſequence of his removal to a diſtant part of the country, neceſſarily prevented. He is confident that it would have been leſs unworthy of public notice, had his ſituation enabled him to conſult Lady B.'s diary and other papers, as he would then have been able to give a more faithful delineation of her character, and to exhibit her daily and cloſe walk with God. Such as it is, it is offered to the candour of the public, and the profits, if any, will be diſpoſed of, in compliance with her requeſt, to the pious poor.

A

SHORT MEMOIR, &c.

THOUGH the records of the pious dead are not frequently graced with the names of those who were dignified with worldly titles and honours, yet it pleases God sometimes to select the monuments of his grace from among the rich and noble, to shew that he is no respecter of persons, but is rich in mercy to all that call upon him. The subject of this memoir was a distinguished instance of this selection. Being an only child, and by the death of her father in possession of a large fortune, and in expectation of a very considerable addition to it at the death of another near relative, she was brought up by that relative with the most anxious solicitude, and with a careful attention to every thing that might qualify her for an elevated rank in society. Her various accomplishments attracted many admirers, and she at length gave her hand to the noble lord, whose title she bore.

Thus dignified and introduced into high life, she was, for a season, fascinated with the splendour and allurements of nobility, which seemed to absorb all her thoughts, and gratify her utmost wishes. But

it pleased God by a series of trials, to convince her that no situation, however high and elevated, can secure to its possessor uninterrupted felicity. These trials were sanctified to her, and promoted her best interests; and she meekly kissed the rod, and adored the hand that by the wholesome discipline of it, brought her to the knowledge of herself, and of her God. That admirable book of the late Rev. James Hervey, "Theron and Aspasio," was the means, under God, of effecting this important change in her religious views, and of exhibiting to her the source of true and permanent happiness. She read it with pleasure, and drank in like a thirsty traveller, the refreshing streams of consolation there opened to her view. She saw from hence the insufficiency of her own righteousness and method of salvation, on which she had been resting, and was made willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation of her hope and trust. Weary and heavy-laden, she heard her Saviour's gracious call, "Come unto me,"* she obeyed and found rest to her soul. Then "what things were once gain to her," with St. Paul, "she counted loss for Christ. Yea, she "counted all things but loss for the excellency of "the knowledge of Christ Jesus her Lord. Her "one desire was to win Christ, and be found in "him, not having her own righteousness, which "was of the law, but that which is through the "faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God "by faith."†

* Matth. xi. 28.

† Philip. iii. 7, 8, 9.

But hear her speak her own sentiments on this momentous subject, in a letter written to her only child, The right honourable Lady Mary Beauclerk, and left with the writer of this memoir to be given to her after her mother's death.

“ Dear Child,

“ When you receive these lines, I shall be gone to that *dear Jesus* whom I used to talk and read to you about. Pray now take some of my best advice; hear my faith, and pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to give you the same. He was pleased to shew me at twenty-five years of age, soon after you were born, that all my strict attendance at public worship, my many prayers, alms, and reading good books, would not make me good. I saw I finned in whatever I did. I read that precious book, Mr. Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio*,” (which I particularly recommend to you;) I there saw that I was to apply to Jesus for every thing; I did so; he gave me to trust that I was pardoned through his blood, justified, completely justified, through his righteousness. He has guided me hitherto by his good spirit, and I am assured he will stand faithfully by me in the last and trying hour of death.* Yes, “this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.”†

The whole of her after-life furnished indubitable evidence that she had believed unto righteousness. She soon joined herself to the people of God,

* The confidence expressed in this letter, which was written about three years before her death, her subsequent happy and triumphant departure fully justified.

and never appeared to be ashamed to own, whose she was, and whom she served. She was moulded into the image of her Saviour, and the graces of his spirit shone conspicuous in her. If in one grace more than another she resembled him, it was in the most amiable part of his character, in meekness and humility. Here she shone a pattern to all, especially to those of her own rank and station. She was the most amiably condescending to all her inferiors, even to the poorest, and more especially to the pious poor, and would enter the meanest cottage with pleasure, to converse, and join in religious exercises, with the people of God. She has attended the writer of this memoir to the sick beds of the poor disciples of Christ, and with sympathising tears heard them relate their trials, their supports and consolations. She truly loved all, who loved her Saviour, of whatever denomination, though her chief connexion was with the members of the established church. With them she communicated, and heard the word of God. Her attendance at church was constant and uniform, and *always early*. She never disturbed the congregation by coming in after the service was begun. She might indeed justly adopt the psalmist's words, "How amiable
 "are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul
 "longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the
 "Lord.* Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy
 "house, and the place where thine honour dwell-
 "eth."† Though for the last few years of her life

* Pf. lxxxiv. 1, 2.

† Pf. xxvi. 8.

she had to ride, almost constantly on horseback, upwards of sixteen miles, to and from the churches where she attended to hear the true doctrines of the church of England, those truths which she loved, and which were her support and consolation in death, yet neither frost, snow, rain or bad roads were sufficient to detain her at home. Will not some, even among those who profess the same truths, feel a sense of shame, and be stirred to emulation, when they read this; whose consciences testify how prone they are to permit any trivial incident, or even the appearance of unfavourable weather, to detain them from the house of God?

The heavenly repast which Lady B. obtained in waiting upon God in his ordinances, afforded her support and refreshment all the week. She could say with the prophet, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."* She has frequently expressed to the writer of this memoir, how much she has been comforted under the word of God. This was indeed her grand support and relief under her various afflictions, and caused them to appear in her view at least comparatively light. It was this that enabled her to submit to them without a murmuring word, fully confident that though her heavenly Father was leading her by a rough and thorny road, it was the right way to his kingdom.

* Jer. xv. 16.

She was a warm friend to the doctrines of grace, which she delighted to hear set forth. She saw in her own case that salvation was all of grace, and that she was, by the grace of God, what she was. These doctrines diffused their influence through all her conduct. She became dead to the world, and her whole desire was to live to and for God. Though her ability to relieve her Saviour in his poor members was not so extensive as she wished, yet by dedicating to their service, what she might without the least impropriety or blame have used for other purposes, she was enabled to afford them frequent and seasonable relief.

Thus bloomed this beautiful plant of the Lord's right hand planting; diffusing by a holy and heavenly life, a sweet fragrance on every side. But it was not destined to bloom long here, it was shortly to be removed to a more genial clime, and being transplanted into the paradise of God, there to bloom in eternal youth and vigour. Much more might have been said on this part of the subject, but it was not the design of this memoir to enlarge here,—it was merely to draw the outlines of Lady B.'s character, to state her sentiments and views, and to shew their happy influence on her life and conversation. Lady Burford's was the life of a christian.

“ And is there, who the blessed cross wipes off

“ As a foul blot from his dishonoured brow?”

YOUNG.

Are there to be found those, in whose eyes such a life appears with a forbidding and unamiable aspect?

We would ask, what is there irrational in all this? What is there inconsistent or unbecoming a creature dependant upon God, and shortly to appear at his awful bar? Does religion debase or debilitate the understanding? Is there any thing in the character before us, that should lead us to revolt from the principles under whose benign influence she acted? Do we not see a most amiable person, in one of the highest stations of life, dead to all the allurements and glitter of worldly grandeur, but alive to God, and devoted to his service, and actively employed in doing good to her fellow creatures? And is such an example unworthy of imitation? Is devotedness to God unreasonable or degrading? Or is there any thing in a life thus spent, that justly merits the too common stigma of fanaticism and enthusiasm? Is it said, that religion is very well in its place, but that there is no necessity to make so much ado about it? We would ask, what is the place it ought to hold in society? And to what criterion must we refer to determine this? Is the word of God or the custom of mankind to be the umpire? If the Bible is permitted to settle this important question, we are there taught, that religion should occupy the *first* and *chief* place, yea, that it should engage the *whole* man, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his "righteousness."* "One thing is needful."† "Fear "God and keep his commandments, for this is the "*whole* duty of man."‡ If these scriptures mean any thing, they clearly shew that our grand business

* Matth. vi. 33.

† Luke x. 42.

‡ Eccles. xii. 13.

here, the very end for which we were sent into the world, is, that we should live to God, that the aim, purpose, and design of our whole lives, should be to serve and glorify him. If this be indeed religion, is there any danger that we should make more to do about it than is necessary, as its adversaries unjustly insinuate? Can we serve God too much, or go beyond the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind." *

Is it further objected, that religion is apt to make people melancholy? Are irreligious people then always free from it? Are they the only happy persons? And is it their exclusive privilege to contemplate the awful concerns of another world in calm composure, and in their private and retired moments to bring their whole lives in review, without any gloomy or unpleasant forebodings? Strange! that religion, which is called by a celebrated poet, "the soul of happiness," should be considered by any as tending to make people melancholy. So far from its having this effect on Lady B. it was the grand means of keeping her from it. It was her support in life, and her solace in death. It is true that she no longer found any pleasure in the amusements and gaieties of fashionable life. She no longer frequented the assembly, the ball-room, or the card-table in search of happiness. She had found it in substance,

* Matth. xxii. 37.

in reality, in the knowledge of God, and in a holy and heavenly intercourse with him. Like Enoch, she walked with God, and is that melancholy? She was conformed to the image of God, and is that misery? What! misery to be like God! melancholy to walk with him! Then heaven itself must be a state of complete melancholy and misery. For there the christian

“ _____ walks with God,

“ High in salvation, and the climes of bliss.” *

“ There, he wakes up after his glorious likeness, “ and is satisfied with it as the fulness of happiness.” † How astonishing must be the blindness, how inveterate the prejudices of mankind, which prevent them from seeing, that by condemning a life of devotedness to God, and conformity to his holy image, they in fact condemn the very employment and happiness of heaven. For the christian, by such a life here, is trained up for a similar, but more perfect life above. Yet how remarkable is the inconsistency of mankind on this subject! Though they thus stigmatize religion as encouraging gloom and melancholy, and stand aloof from it in a time of health and prosperity, in sickness or in the near approach of death, they will fly to it for support and consolation, and tacitly acknowledge it to be the only cordial they want, or that can do them good. Though they account the life of the chris-

* Par. Lost, book xi. ver. 707.

† Ps. xvii. 15.

tian to be folly, they will earnestly wish to die his death, and enjoy his future portion, and will say with the carnal prophet, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."*

As we have seen the happy influence which true religion shed on the life and conversation of Lady B. so we may now see the support and consolation it afforded in a dying hour.

"The *death-bed* of the just _____

"_____

"Angels should paint it, angels ever there!

"There on a post of honour, and of joy."

YOUNG.

Pass we then to the closing scene, alas! too soon approaching. But the judge of all the earth does right. For wise ends, he permits some of his dearest children to go through a fiery furnace in their way to glory. Lady B. however, with all that have trod in the same path before her, can *now* say to the praise of the glory of his grace, "He hath done all things well."†

Though the writer of this memoir, by a remarkable providence, had not the opportunity of visiting her during her last illness, yet being frequently informed by letter of the state of her mind, he can confidently assert, that she was generally comfortable and happy.

* Numb. xxiii. 10.

† Mark vii. 37.

"Her God sustain'd her in her final hour!

"Her final hour brought glory to her God!"

YOUNG.

The writer begs leave to remark, that the following relation of Lady B.'s dying experience, does not include all the sweet and heavenly expressions that dropped from her lips, or all the striking evidences she gave of the happy state of her mind, but only such as from the impression they made at the time, could not well escape the recollection of her attendants, or such as were immediately noted down.

The 22d of June was the first Sunday that she was confined at home, though evidently declining in health for some time before. In the course of the following week she was taken very ill, and from the excessive weakness of her mortal frame appeared to her attendants to be going off in a very triumphant manner indeed. Clasping her hands together and looking joyfully upwards, as if prepared to take her happy flight to heaven, she repeated again and again with the most lively sensations, "Oh! how happy! Oh! how happy!" "I shall be with Jesus! I shall be happy for ever, for ever." Her weak frame for a while sunk under this exertion, but when not able to express all she felt, her lips were observed to move incessantly, and her hands to be clasped together, as in the act of fervent prayer. In a short time she recovered sufficient strength to be able to proceed in the same joyful strain, and to manifest the exceeding happy state of her mind. Her growing weakness however

would not permit her to converse much without being exhausted, yet she continued to evidence the fulness of her joy, saying, "I am very happy, and
"long to be with Jesus!"

She saw the last enemy approaching, without any thing terrific in his appearance, and could say, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the
"strength of my heart and my portion for ever."*

This happy state of mind did not, however, continue uninterrupted during the whole of her illness. While she continued in health, she had scarce ever known what it was to entertain a doubt of the safety of her state, or to experience any cloud intercepting the light of God's countenance. Now she felt an awful reverse, she walked in darkness, and had no light. For it pleased God to permit the enemy of her peace to make his last attack upon her, to fill her with vain imaginations, and to deprive her of all sensible comfort. She was in consequence, for a time, in great distress, crying out, "O what a dreadful night I have had, all is dark
"around me, and the enemy of my soul assaulting
"me." Though the grand adversary was thus permitted to sift and to try her, he did not long gratify his malice, or enjoy his seeming triumph over her; her Saviour, who had loved her with an everlasting love, soon restored to her the light of his countenance, dissipated her gloom, and filled her again with all joy and peace in believing.

* Pf. lxxiii. 26.

Under the influence of this blessed change, she called one of her attendants to her, and said, "Write this down, that I have desired to leave a testimony behind me, and it has been granted to myself and others"—"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Some one told me, "Heaven was not quite ready for me yet, I must wait my appointed time," but I long to go, and to be with Jesus!" In the middle of the same night, she called to the same person to write down the following words, which she repeated with great sweetness and energy. "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!*" The vision is yet for an appointed time;† I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body; yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another."‡ When recovered from fainting, occasioned by the excessive debility of her frame, she said, "Oh why did you bring me back? I seemed to myself to be going into heaven, and heard them singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."||

* Rev. xix. 6.

† Hab. ii. 2.

‡ Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

|| Rev. v. 12.

Fully sensible that the time of her departure was rapidly approaching, she desired her only child to be called into the room, that she might witness the happy state of her mind, and see her sleep in Jesus.

She was for several days so weak as to be able to say little or nothing, except when asked by a serious attendant, if her mind was comfortable, she replied, "Very much so."

Once, when sensible of great pain, she observed, "It may well be said,

"God moves in a mysterious way,
"His wonders to perform."

COWPER.

A few days before the Lord was pleased to release her from this vale of tears, she looked with a most gracious smile at one of her attendants, and said, "Now I know that all is right, I shall soon be well." At another time she said, "I shall be with Jesus, and I shall be like him, for I shall see him as he is." She appeared to be frequently engaged in prayer, her hands being folded together as in earnest supplication, and at all times she shewed where her heart and affections were fixed, and the heavenly tendency of her mind.

A very short time before her departure, she seemed, like the holy prophet on mount Pisgah, to have a view of the promised land, and to anticipate the

joy that awaited her. The last words she was heard to utter that could be at all understood, were, "Jesus, Jesus," probably like the protomartyr, when calling out, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." During the whole of the last day, there was great sweetness in her countenance, she appeared more than commonly happy, when about three o'clock in the afternoon of Friday the 18th of July, her warfare was accomplished, and she entered into the joy of her Lord.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."*

"Life take thy chance: but, oh! for such an end!

"*There point, my wishes! center there; and burn.*"

Thus lived and thus died the Countess of Burford, an eminent instance of the riches of divine grace, and an exemplary pattern of every thing excellent and praise-worthy in the christian character.

A very faint sketch is here given of her amiable life and manners. She was indeed a burning and a shining light. And the writer of this memoir will ever consider it, as one of the happy periods of his life, while he was honoured with her acquaintance, benefited by her prayers, and instrumental in confirming her faith and promoting her comfort. And he would devoutly wish for himself, that his last end may be like hers. That the same

* Pf. xxxvii. 37.

glorious Jesus—the same precious faith—the same confirmed hope, may be his in the dying moment, that he, like her, may die in the Lord, believing, rejoicing, triumphing.

She was interred in the family vault of the Duke of St. Alban's, at Hanworth, in Middlesex, on Saturday the 26th of July, the funeral service being read, at her particular desire, by the Rev. John Waltham, A. M. Rector of Darlaston, Staffordshire, and then Curate of Ickleford and Pirton, Hertfordshire, and on Sunday the 3d of August, two funeral sermons were preached to crowded congregations, by the same person, at Ickleford and Pirton, the churches she frequented so constantly during the last years of her life.

The text in the morning at Ickleford was from Heb. vi. 12. “Be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” The text in the afternoon at Pirton was from Numbers xxiii. 10. “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

FINIS.

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